

***THIS I BELIEVE: LIFE IS DETERMINED BY THE CHOICES ONE MAKES***

‘Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?’ Alice speaks to Cheshire Cat.

‘That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat.

‘I don’t much care where—’ said Alice.

‘Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,’ said the Cat.

-from *Alice’s Adventure in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Alice and the Cheshire cat drew an appropriate analogy on the importance of the choices one makes during his entire life – our choices determine our destination. Without any exception, I am here today because of the choices I have made. Choices are the hinges of destiny. This I believe.

Prior to my secondary school education, the idea of ‘choices’ was considered as a distant one to me as my parents make most of the decisions in my life. However, an incident changed my perception on how difficult the choices adults face.

The first day I stepped into the hall of my new secondary school, I was immediately thrown into a whirl of confusion as I tried to spot my class and search for familiar faces. None. I groaned, for it meant that I had to make new friends, forcing me to step out of my comfort zone.

Being an introvert, I was unwilling to mingle around. Gradually, I was labelled as the “loner of the class”. Once, during group work in class, I realized that everyone else was already in groups except me. At that moment, a folded handwritten note was passed to me. It read, “Life is determined by the choices one makes. Wan Yun, either open your heart to receive new friends now, or it may remain closed forever. The choice is yours.” It was only then I realized there was a need to change.

Gradually, like an onion, I began to unfold the layers and warm up to people. My classmates changed their perspectives of me and their attitudes towards me. I appreciated their friendliness, and return them with mine. From this incident, I discovered I always have choices and sometimes it's only a choice of attitude.

In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility. Only I can decide who I want to be. This I believe.